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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS YEREVAN 001002

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: INSTANT REPLAY: NO VENUE YET FOR OPPOSITION
CONGRESS

REF: A. YEREVAN 406

[B](#). YEREVAN 999

[1](#). (SBU) On December 12, Levon Zurabian, a top LTP aide and coordinator of the ANC, publicly threatened to hold a planned conference in Tbilisi should the ANC not receive permission by December 15 to hold it at the Government Sessions Hall. Having applied on December 3, Zurabian said that absent an official reply by that time, the ANC would consider that their application to hold the conference has been refused. Zurabian told Emboff early on December 15 that the ANC has to date received only a verbal response, over the phone, from the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, who is reported to have said the application would not be approved.

[2](#). (SBU) Zurabian noted that the ANC has also requested rented meeting space at the upscale Marriott and Congress hotels in downtown Yerevan, but that the hotels have refused their requests. Zurabian added that the ANC on December 12 also submitted a second application to hold the conference, in the name of the Republic Party (one of the 16 political parties making up the ANC), asking for any date between December 20-23 at the Government Sessions Hall. The GOAM has yet to reply to Zurabian's statements.

[3](#). (SBU) COMMENT: Should the ANC be denied a venue, it will be the latest in a string of at least two dozen denied venue requests to NGOs, international organizations, and political parties (ref B). Regarding this ANC request, the tactics of both the government and the opposition are reminiscent of those deployed in late April, when the authorities waited until the last minute, reportedly after the ANC threatened to hold the conference in Georgia, before providing the venue to the ANC. The ANC eventually held its first conference at the venue on May 2 (ref A). END COMMENT.
YOVANOVITCH